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ABSTRACT

Information, guidelines, and activities for jumping rope are given. A short history of jumping rope explains how it evolved from a spring ritual for men to a play activity involving mostly young girls. Physical and cultural reasons are given as to why jumping rope has been more a sport for girls than for boys. Research studies are noted which show that jumping rope is a good cardiopulmonary activity that is being included in present-day adult fitness routines. It is pointed out that jumping rope provides an excellent source of release from tension and stress, and is an effective vehicle for achieving and maintaining appropriate fitness levels. Advice is given on selecting commercial ropes, making jump ropes, fitting the rope to the jumper, storing and cleaning ropes, and integrating rope jumping into the rest of the curriculum. The remainder of this document contains 39 jump rope activities arranged in a skill-building sequence which includes: (1) beginner rope exercises; (2) single jumping exercises; (3) double exercises; and (4) exercises using rhythms and chants for children to recite while jumping. Concluding this document are 14 references to journal articles and books. (EM)

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STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE* and OTHER JUMPING ROPE IDEAS

....In ancient Greece, as the gentle Agean breezes began to warm the earth and green shoots began to sprout, hop stems were stripped of their leaves and were used as ropes to skip....On Good Friday on Brighton Beach in England one could watch six to ten men skipping on a rope as a part of their ocean harvest festival ritual ....and today, these primitive adult rituals are continued in the form of games by the less "self-conscious community of childhood." This occurs worldwide each Spring when the season's most popular activity appears once again in backyards, schoolyards, parks, playgrounds, and almost all other places vistied by children (Holbrook, 1957).

Surprisingly, rope skipping was a sought after source of esteem for boys and men long before it became a predominately girls' activity. Now, it is almost exclusively a set of cultural games and rhymes played by school-age girls. In addition, the change in female attire from long dresses to skirts, shorts, and jeans, the social acceptance of girls in rigorous outdoor play, and the shift in play emphasis from drama to agility are all contributing factors in the sexual preference change over that began in the mid ninteenth and early twentieth centuries (Sutton-Smith, 1959) and continues today. It is interesting to note that when this pasttime was exclusively a boy's activity, no rhymed verses, chants, or stories were associated with it. The shift, then, was accompanied by an increase in rhythmic vocalizations, a dimension of motor performance in which girls

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tend to xcell (Cratty, 1970).

Typically, jumping and skipping rope are thought of as just children's pasttimes, or, more specifically, as a girl's pasttime; its use as a fitness or aerobic exercise recently broadened the awareness of the values of this activity. As a result of examining this cardio-pulmonary benefits from this form of exercise, adults have begun incorporating it into their fitness routines. Jones, Squires, and Rodahl (1962), when studying the effects of rope skipping on physical work capacity, found that a 5-minute daily program increased physical work capacity by twenty-five percent. In a comparative study, Baker (1968) concluded that 10-minute daily program of jogging also improved cardiovascular efficiency. A study reviewed by James Mitchner (1976) found rope skipping second only to wrestling as an exercise conducive to increasing oxygen utilization. Forced heavy breathing, which results from jumping rope overtime, encourages the heart to establish alternative feed lines, which may save a life in later years. Further, the rapid intake of oxygen was identified as the best way to combat emphysema, a degenerative disease of the lungs. With young preschool children, Schnabl-Dickey (1977) found that mothers play a significant role in children's basic jumping ability. With increasing performance in this skill being associated with comparatively higher levels of maternal discipline, it was reasoned that jumping emphasizes balance as a maturational and focusing component with lesser influence on learning the skill.

HEREDITY OR ENVIRONMENT?

Jumping rope requires that the basic skills of jumping, balancing, and sequencing motor movements developed in the preschool years be combined,

integrated, and coordinated into more complex movements that are acquired through practice, a self initiated act performed by the school-age child. At this point in chronological development, sex differences are apparent in rope jumping participants but not in the execution of the activity. Girls tend to do better than boys in agility and rhythmic activities (Cratty, 1970), which may account in part for their greater use of jump ropes in play. On the other hand, boys excell in skills requiring speed of movement (Espenschade, 1967), speed of reaction (Goodenough,1935), and grip strength (Goss, 1968). Thus, proficiency in the skill of jumping and skipping rope is dependent upon a variety of factors. Success in this activity is not limited to one sex or the other, but rather to involvement in the activity.

Cultural influences of the past have unfortunately biased this excellent activity. Boys have found other avenues for physical performance, not because of any physical inequality, but because of societal mores concerning boyhood. These behavioral expectations, which once excluded girls from participation, seem to have come full circle.

The principle of epigenesis is applicable to understanding the development of rope jumping skills in that the physical growth of preschoolers prepares the child for integration of newly acquired physical skills while in the in the elementary school years. Further, since the activity is fun for children, it most always results in more jump roping! This, very subtly, lengthens the attention span, assists in developing coordination of physical skills, involves memory by requiring recitation, and provides an excellent resource for tension and stress release.

Children, like adults, understandably feel better about themselves when they are physically fit. Research clearly shows that children's self-concept can be increased by increasing their physical fitness (McGowan, Jarman, and Pederson,1974). Fitness, defined as the ability to supply oxygen to the muscles and the ability of the muscles to use oxygen for work, is developed and maintianed through adequate exercise. As discussed earlier, rope jumping is an efficient and effective vehicle for achieving and maintaining appropiate fitness levels.

ANY OLD ROPE?

Currently available on the market are a variety of commercial jumping ropes. The lightweight cotton ropes classified as "children's jump ropes", are not designed to elicit success in the activity because of improper size, shape, and weight. The major requirements for a good rope are length, weight, and rigidity. A rope of proper weight, which is not overly rigid or formless, easily carries itself over the head of the jumper.

Many commercial ropes are covered with plastic tubes. Ropes of this type are are usually adjustable in length and have the desired weight. However, a good clothesline rope will not be adequate for they tend to lose shape and rigidity too rapidly. When this occurs, the rope does not hold the appropiate form and usually results in an interruption of the activity. Therefore, a good jumping rope should be rigid enough to hold its form while at the same time be heavy enough to rotate smoothly over the head of the jumper.

After the selection of a good quality rope, attention should be given to custom fitting its' length to the jumper. This is done by having the child stand on the center of the rope; its ends should reach the armpits.

To prevent unravelling, add about two inches in length to each end prior to cutting. Tie each end in an overhand knot, dip in glue, and allow to dry. Group jump ropes are approximately three times longer in length.

CAN OUR PROGRAM AFFORD THEM?

As indicated earlier, rope activities have many advantages. Even the most expensive commercial ropes are moderately priced. Home made jump ropes are usually much lower in price and more personal to the user. If direct curricular funds are unavailabl , parent-teacher groups, classroom projects, or "everyone supply your own " can all be ways to provide every child with his or her own rope. Storage and upkeep should not be a major concern. Simply drape the ropes over a wooden clothes hanger and slide it to the back of the closet. This storage procedure will allow the ropes to air dry. Upkeep is simply a matter of hand washing the ropes with mild soap to eliminate dirt. Avoid severe twisting of the ropes for this causes embedded grit particles to cut the rope fibers. With minimum care, or for the most part, none at all, the ropes will last for years.

IN THE CLASSROOM?

Jumping rope is a site-specific activity. As a group activity, it is only appropiate in spaces where the child will feel unrestricted in physical movement. Gymnasiums and playgrounds easily meet the spatial requirements demanded by this activity because they allow appropriate access, buffer zones, and safety provisions.

Any dry, relatively surface is suitable for jumping rope. Frequently children develop a preference for a particular type of ground cover, but this is not an initial consideration. Accidents, primarily falling, do not occur often and are usually not a problem for the children. Children jumping on manmade surfaces appear to have as much fun as those on turf or dirt.

Like all activities in a school, the teacher's attitude and preparation parallel the children's participation, enthusiasm, and, often times, proficiency. Suggesting and demonstrating a new technique, holding one end of a group rope, or even demonstrating a particular skill are ways in which the teacher models the activity, encourages participation, and reinforces skill development.

The creative teacher can use rope jumping as a curricular integration technique. Math skills can be learned or reinforced in the measuring and making of personal ropes; language arts skills come into play as children learn poems and chants; music and rhythms are involved in singing the poems; movement education is the focal point of balancing and timing; social skills are enhanced and encouraged through sharing games, taking turns, discussing technique, competitions, and presentations.

Arranged by category, the following are just a few ways to enjoy jumping rope. Undoubtedly the children will have their favorites as well as invent routines on their own. Try a few and see what happens!

Beginners Rope Exercises

1. Helicopter - fold the rope in half and hold the two ends. Whirl the rope around close to the floor and jump each time it comes around.
2. Propellor - same as the helicopter except a partner does the jumping.
3. Double Helicopter - same as helicopter except the chorer (person holding the rope) and partner both jump.
4. Snake - with the rope on the floor, the chorer wiggles the rope rapidly in a snake-like fashion.
5. Limbo - chorer holds the rope taut about 3 feet off the floor.

Each time the jumper goes under the rope without touching it, the chorer lowers it a few inches. (Hassard, 1982).

Single Jumping

1. Toes of both feet.
2. Right foot only.
3. Left foot only.
4. Right foot, then left foot, etc.
5. Alternating feet while skipping forward.
6. Alternating feet while running forward.
7. Jumping on both feet with eyes closed.
8. Pepper - turn rope at fastest speed possible.
9. Elbows - cross arms at elbow and turn rope (Hall, 1941).
10. Ankles - cross one foot at ankle and jump (Alabama State Dept of Educ.).
11. Visiting - one swings, another jumps in and faces person swinging rope. Both jump, then visitor jumps out.
12. Salt - same as pepper, except as slow as possible.
13. Counting - chant numbers, one for each jump, and see how far the counting gets before missing.
14. Backward - try each of the previous activities while swinging the rope backwards.

Double Jumping - Each of the following requires a long rope, two chorers and jumpers.

1. Pepper, salt, mustard, vinegar, hot. - the rope is turned slowly, at first, as these words are chanted. Momemtum increases until "hot" is recited, at which time the rope is turned rapidly, as in Pepper.

2. Chase the fox - one child, the fox runs through the turning rope while the pack (all other jumpers) follows. The fox sets the pace and the pack must match the demonstrated skill. This continues until someone misses.
3. Baking bread - one child jumps in holding a stone, puts it on the ground while jumping, picks it up, and jumps out.
4. Winding the clock - one child jumps in, counts to twelve while turning around for each number, and jumps out.
5. French dutch - one child jumps in while jumping with a single rope at the same time, and then jumps out.
6. Double dutch - using two long ropes, one held in each hand and turned in an alternating pattern, a child jumps into both ropes.
7. Ages - youngest child jumps his/her age, jumps out, next youngest jumps in, and so forth.
8. Partners - two or more jumpers jump in.
9. Tag - play tag chasing "IT" through the rope.
10. Bouncing a ball - jump in, bounce a ball, jump out.

Rhymes and Chants - Recitations are made by both chorers and jumpers.

1. Zosey, Bipsey, tell me true.
   Who shall I be married to?
   A, B. C. C, etc.
   When the player misses, that's the first name on a future spouse (Holbrook, 1957).
2. All in together girls,
   Never mind the weather girls,
   When I call your birthday,
   Please run out.
   January 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.

Child must jump until correct month and day are reached.

3. Every morning at 8 O'Clock

   You may hear the postman's knock

   1, 2, 3, 4, there goes _____.

   Child runs out after naming next jumper.

4. Knife and fork

   Lay the cloth

   Bring me up a leg of pork,

   Don't forget the salt,

   Mustard vinegar, pepper!

   On pepper, chorers turn rope rapidly.

5. Down in the valley,

   Where the green grass grows,

   There sat Genie

   Sweet as a rose.

   She sang, she sang,

   She sang so sweet,

   Along came Jimmie,

   And kissed her on the cheek.

   How many kisses did he give her?

   1, 2, 3, 4, etc.

   Child jumps until he/she misses (Emrich and Korson, 1947).

6. Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around,

   Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground;

   Teddy bear, teddy bear, tie your shoe;

   Teddy bear, teddy bear, skiddle daddkedi! (Jumper runs out; new jumper enters)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, point to the sky;

Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your glass eye;

Teddy bear, teddy bear, pull your wig;

Teddy bear, teddy bear, dance a jig.

An action song, the momentum increases until one jumper misses (Emrich and Karson, 1947)

7. Spanish dancer, do the split;

Spanish dancer, give a high kick;

Spanish dancer, turn around;

Spanish dancer, get out of town.

Another action chant that moves the jumpers rapidly through a series of exercises.

8. Keep the ketting boiling,

An empty rope is a miss.

The chorers chant as jumpers come in and leave. If the rope is empty, two jumpers must become chorers.

9. Charlie Chaplin sat on a pin,

How many inches did it go in?

1, 2, 3, 4, etc.

Jumper continues until one misses.

10. House for rent, inquire within,

When 2 move out,

Let Debbie move in,

When Debbie moves out

Let Gail move in.

When Gail moves out,

Let Bobbie move in. (Continue until all jumpers have had a turn)

When Jimmy moves out (last player),

Let the house fall in (Stop the rope).

This fast paced activity allows everyone to hear his/her name chanted. (Embrich and Korson, 1947)

Each of these activities can be adapted, extended, or varied as need arises. Try jumping to favorite poems and songs. When the children become skilled, try precision jumping using groups of children performing routines.

* Taken from the folk verse

Strawberry shortcake, huckleberry pie,

I have to keep jumping until you take a try.

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